

Message Text

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63/46

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-10 EUR-10 IO-03

L-02 PM-03 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

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O R 161141Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4649

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL DANANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

CDR USSAG NKP RTAFB IMMEDIATE

COMUSMACTHAI

DAO SAIGON/AOSOP-OR

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CORRECTED COPY (TO TEXT PARA ONE)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, MILI, VS

SUBJECT: VIETNAM CEASE-FIRE WEEKLY ASSESSMENT, JULY 9 - 15, 1973

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY REMAINED AT ABOUT THE SAME LEVELS AS IT HAS FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS. THE FIGHTING WEST OF KONTUM CITY CONTINUED WITH THE GVN FORCES MAKING LITTLE HEADWAY. THE OTHER PREVIOUS AREA OF RELATIVELY HEAVY COMBAT, CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE IN MR 4, SAW A DECREASE IN THE LEVEL OF ACTIVITY, ONLY TO BE REPLACED BY AN INCREASE IN MR 3 WHERE RVNAF ATTEMPTS TO CLEAR A LAND ROUTE TO PHUOC LONG PROVINCE HAVE RUN INTO STIFF ENEMY RESISTANCE. THE GVN IS CONTINUING ITS CAMPAIGNS TO CONSOLIDATE CONTROL OF THE COASTAL STRIP IN MR'S 1 AND 2 AND OTHER AREAS IN MR'S 3 AND 4. MR 3 REPORTS THAT THE MORALE OF RVNAF IN THE REGION APPEARS TO BE LAGGING; THE TROOPS WERE NEVER ENTHUSIASTIC FIGHTERS DURING WAR AND ARE NOW EVEN LESS ENTHUSIASTIC DURING THE QUASI-PEACE THAT HAS DEVELOPED. THE HEJMC IS NOW DEBATING THE FORMATION OF INVESTIGATION TEAMS TO VISIT THE SCENES OF RECENT FIGHTING IN KONTUM AND CHUONG THIEN. BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED TO THE VISITS, BUT ARE DISAGREEING STILL ON WHETHER THE TEAM SHOULD BE FORMED AT THE SAIGON OR AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL. THE MAJOR ICCSHJVELGAMENT WAS THE RELEASE, FINALLY, OF THE TWO CANDEL OFFICERS HELD BY THE PRG IN MR 3. THE TWO OFFICERS, AND THEIR VIETNAMESE DRIVER AND INTERPRETER, WERE RELEASED IN GOOD CONDITION ON JULY 15. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WITH SHARPLY RISING PRICES REPORTED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY IS A TOPIC OF INCREASING CONCERN TO ALL VIETNAMESE. END SUMMARY.

2. AS CEASE-FIRE II BEGAN ITS SECOND MONTH, THE LEVEL OF MILITARY ACTIVITY REMAINED ABOUT THE SAME AS IN THE PREVIOUS REPORTING PERIOD, WITH THE LOCUS OF THE MAJOR COMBAT SHIFTING SOMEWHAT. MR 1 REPORTED A SLIGHT DROP IN THE LEVEL OF MILITARY ACTIVITY.

MR 2

REMAINED ABOUT THE SAME AS IN THE PREVIOUS FOUR WEEKS.

SERIOUS FIGHTING CONTINUED IN THE AREA WEST OF KONTUM CITY WHERE THE ON-GOING RVNAF ATTEMPTS TO RETAKE LOST TERRITORY REPORTEDLY
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MADE LITTLE HEADWAY DURING THE WEEK. MR 3 SAW A SHARP INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE; 126 INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JULY 13 AS OPPOSED TO 69 FOR THE PRECEDING PERIOD. THE MR 3 EFFORT TO CLEAR A LAND ROUTE TO RICE-SHORT PHUOC LONG PROVINCE RAN INTO STILL ENEMY RESISTANCE ALONG ROUTE 1A BETWEEN PHUOC VINH IN BINH DUONG PROVINCE AND DONG XOAI IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCE. ELEMENTS OF THE 5TH DIVISION MET WITH AT LEAST ONE SERIOUS SET-BACK. THE OPERATION IS APPARENTLY CONTINUING.

THE PROVINCE OF CHUONG THIEN, LONG ONE OF THE HOT SPOTS OF
CEASE-FIRE II CONTINUED TO BE RELATIVELY PLACID AS DID MR 4
AS A WHOLE.

3. THE GVN IS CONTINUING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE LULL IN FIGHTING
TO CONSOLIDATE ITS HOLD OVER TERRITORY IN ALL REGIONS. REGIONAL
FORCES AND RANGER ELEMENTS IN QUANG TIN PROVINCE ARE CONTINUING TO
EXPAND THEIR AREA IN NORTHWESTERN TAM KY DISTRICT AGAINST LITTLE
ENEMY RESISTANCE. THE 2ND DIVISION AND SECTOR FORCES IN QUANG NGAI
ARE ALSO CONTINUING TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR CONTROL OVER THE LOWLAND
AREAS, LARGELY BY MANEUVERING RVNAF UNITS INTO POSITION TO BLOCK
VC/NVA SUPPLY ROUTES, FORCING THEM TO WITHDRAW TO THE WEST. RVNAF
OPERATIONS TO CLEAR LOWLAND AREAS IN BINH DINH PROVINCE IN MR 2
ARE ALSO CONTINUING WITH SOME SUCCESS, HOWEVER, THE VC/NVA RE-
SISTANCE IS BEGINNING TO INCREASE. IN ADDITION TO THE OPERATION
ALONG ROUTE 1A IN MR 3, RVNAF IS HOLDING OPEN THE PORTIONS OF ROUTES
14 AND 311 FROM DONG XOAI TO SONG BE, THE PHUOC LONG CAPITAL, THAT
HAVE ALREADY BEEN CLEARED. THE DECREASE IN THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN
CHUONG THIEN IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF RVNAF ARMS IN CLEAR-
ING THE VC/NVA FROM THE AREA IN THE OPINION OF SEVERAL GVN OFF-
ICIALS IN MR 4; HOWEVER, CONGEN CAN THO FEELS SUCH OPTIMISM MAY BE
PREMATURE AND THE ENEMY MAY MERELY BE RESTING AND REFITTING OUT OF
PROVINCE, PREPARING FOR ANOTHER HIGH POINT.

4. CONGEN BIEN HOA REPORTS SIGNS THAT RVNAF MORALE IS DETER-
IORATING IN THAT REGION. THEY CITE THE EXAMPLE OF THE FIGHTING
ALONG ROUTE 1A WHERE ARVN IMMEDIATELY BOGGED DOWN UPON MEETING
RESISTANCE AND SOME UNITS REPORTEDLY SURRENDERED TO THE VC/NVA
WITHOUT MUCH OF A FIGHT. RANGER ELEMENTS IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCE HAVE
ALSO REPORTEDLY FLED THE SCENE AFTER ONLY BRIEF CONTACT WITH THE
ENEMY ALONG ROUTE 14. EVEN THE RANGERS AT TONG LE CHAN WHO
SURVIVED FOUR MONTHS OF COMMUNIST SHELLING ARE NOW SUFFERING
FROM A DROP IN MORALE, SO MUCH SO THAT PRESIDENT THIEU HAS AUTHORIZED
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THE WHOLE BATTALION TO BE ROTATED OUT OF THE CAMP. TODAY'S
QUASI-PEACE CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN CITED AS A FACTOR IN THE RELUCTANCE
OF MR 3 RVNAF PERSONNEL TO FIGHT.

5. WITH JULY 15 RETURN OF MISSING CANDEL MEN, WE ANTICIPATE ICCS
PLENARY WILL AGAIN BEGIN TO FOCUS ON LONG OVERDUE ADMINISTRATIVE
AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, AS WELL AS BACK-LOGGED AGENDA FOR NUMEROUS
INVESTIGATION REQUESTS. THESE INCLUDE SURPRISINGLY LARGE NUMBER
FROM PRG, WHO MAY NOW BELIEVE THAT ICCS INVESTIGATIONS CAN BE USED
TO SERVE PRG PURPOSES. ICCS FIELD ACTIVITIES, ALREADY REDUCED DUR-
ING PAST WEEK WITH MANY CANDEL REPS CONFINED TO STAYING IN TOWNS,
WILL HAVE BENEFIT OF CANDEL SUPPORT FOR BARELY ONE MORE WEEK BEFORE
CANDEL STARTS TO WIND-DOWN ITS OPERATION. THOUGH CANDEL WILL MAKE
SHOW OF MAINTAINING FULL HEAD OF STEAM UNTIL LAST DAY, WE NOTE
CANDEL SPIRIT IS FLAGGING AND FIELD REPS ARE UNDERSTANDABLY

LEARY OF ANY FURTHER RISKS.

6. THE TWO PARTY JOINING MILITARY COMMISSION MEETINGS HAVE BEGUN TO FOCUS ON PRG DEL PROPOSAL THAT THE TPJMC HEADQUARTERS IN SAIGON FORM INVESTIGATION TEAMS TO VISIT CHUONG THIEN AND KONTUM. BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED THAT THE TEAMS WOULD HAVE TWO FUNCTIONS; I.E., TO INVESTIGATE CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS AND TO DETERMINE THE LOCATION OF OPPOSING TROOP UNITS IN THE AREA. THE REMAINING MATTER OF DISAGREEMENT IS STILL SIGNIFICANT; THE PRG DEL WANTS THE TEAMS TO BE FORMED FROM PERSONNEL ASSIGNED IN SAIGON WHILE THE GVN DEL, HOPING TO STIMULATE THE DEPLOYMENT OF PRG PERSONNEL TO THE FIELD, IS HOLDING OUT FOR THE TEAMS TO BE FORMED AT THE REGIONAL OR LOCAL LEVEL. LESS PROGRESS WAS MADE ON OTHER PENDING TPJMC MATTERS: THE PRG DEL REFUSES TO CONSIDER A DRAFT GVN PROPOSAL ON THE COMMITMENTS OF THE TWO SIDES TOWARD THE ICCS; AND, THE MATTER OF PRISONER RELEASES IS STILL DELAYED BY A DISAGREEMENT ON RELEASE LOCATIONS AND SAFETY GUARANTEES FOR ICCS OBSERVERS.

7. THE FPJMT LIAISON FLIGHT FROM SAIGON TO HANOI WAS CANCELLED FOR THE FOURTH CONSECUTIVE WEEK AS THE DRV DEL AGAIN REFUSED TO SIGN THE ROUTINE SAFETY CERTIFICATE.

8. TWO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE CAUSING INCREASING CONCERN. THE DROUGHT IN MR 1 AND NORTHERN MR 2 HAS ENDED TEMPORARILY AS THE RESULT OF TYPHOON ANITA'S WELCOME RAIN. HOWEVER, MUCH OF THE DAMAGE, AT LEAST IN MR 1, HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE; WHILE THE RAIN WILL HELP
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THE NEXT CROP, THE CURRENT CROP WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED. THIS RICE SHORTAGE FURTHER CONTRIBUTES TO THE ALREADY RAPIDLY RISING PRICE LEVELS. THE IMPOSITION OF THE VALUE ADDED TAX ON JULY 1 LED TO DRASTIC PRICE INCREASES IN MR 3 AND ELSEWHERE. FEW MERCHANTS UNDERSTAND THE VAT OR HAVE ADEQUATE RECORDS ON WHICH TAX ASSESSMENTS CAN BE BASED. THIS CONFUSION, PLUS THE MERCHANTS WILL-FOUNDED FEARS THAT A NEW TAX WILL MEAN ADDITIONAL GOUGING BY TAX COLLECTORS AND OTHER OFFICIALS, HAS RESULTED, IN THE MERCHANTS AUTOMATICALLY UPPING PRICES BY 30 TO 40 PER CENT FOR SOME COMMODITIES.
APPLING

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